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In vitium ducit culpæ fuga. HOR.

At the period of the world in which our lot is cast, unaccountable as it may appear, there is as much dispute about the principles of common intercourse, and the terms of ordinary language, as if they had only just arisen into notice. Men seem to vary the nature

of their definitions, at every succeſſive ſuggeſtion of intereſt and fear: ſo that, inſtead of proceeding by ſome fixed ſtandard of general acceptation, we run the hazard, in our ſlighteſt actions, of violating the caprices of thoſe whom caſual circumſtances may throw in our way. There is ſurely no inconvenience equal to that of being compelled to pauſe in our advances toward knowledge, and interrupt our reſearches into truth, by the ſilly modifications which thoſe ſimple terms may receive, whoſe name and character ought long ago to have been ſettled by the united conſent of mankind. The tediouſneſs which accuracy requires is quite ſufficient of itſelf, without incurring the additional labor of waſting our energies in uſeleſs explanations, and trifling diſcuſſions.

It is without doubt no derogation from the dignity of the common maſs, to ſmooth away their hours in a taſk, which

as to importance, is upon an even level with their ordinary occupations, in the daily business of common life. But with respect to the influence of their exercises in this way, upon those who are pursuing any more legitimate object of ambition, the case is presented in a different light. Those few well-moulded intellects, whose labors are employed upon marking out new regions for the excursions of mind, and clothing in fresh forms the principles of science, have other incitements to exertion, than the frivolous desire of clogging the paths of reason with obstacles which should never have been started, and difficulties without relation to the end.

The troubles which men derive from this perpetual importunity, and disgusting trifling, are of course felt in a measure by all who take any share in worldly matters: but a man never becomes fully

acquainted with the quiblers about
terms till he becomes an author on
his own account. As long as he is independent for
the bread that feeds him upon the
liberality of any but himself, the
evils resulting from an intercourse
with these associated rebels
against common sense, are
not so closely perceived. But
whenever he falls upon the
mercy of others, before his own
character has been sufficiently
established to defy the attacks
of any power, he rushes unarm-
ed into a tempest of perpetual
trouble. Surrounded by drivel-
lers whom he cannot contra-
dict, and patrons with whom he is a-
fraid to quarrel, he is compel-
led not to be what himself is,
but what others choose to make him.
Critics, witlings, printers, book-
sellers nay, the very journey-
men of the press, presume on the strength
of his property, to
dispute with him on the con-
struction of a sentences, and

the truth of positions, the principles of language, and the rules of art. It seems hard that the enlighteners of the human race should be degraded in the execution of their work, to disciple the elements of literary knowledge, with the drudges that stamp their thoughts upon paper, and advertise them as ready for the market: that maxims which time and study have invented and matured, principles carefully meditated, and theories thoughtfully arranged; ~~shall that learning have~~ should at last pass through the lowly ordeal of slaves, the limits of whose knowledge extend to the durability of ink, the fineness of types, and the quality of paper.

Yet this evil is as inevitable as it is mournful, in every civilized country of the uni-

versal world. Wherever there are associations of literary men, there must be a portion of also set apart to act as drudges in the general scheme of improvement: and the tyranny of these underling workmen will be proportioned, in every case, to the rank of those with whom they are brought into actual contact. The writers whose names at present rank highest on the scroll of moral, political, and literary excellence, have all experienced, in their union with the knaves that live upon the miseries of authors, what it is to have the will chained down, and the inclinations turned from their channel, by the influence of circumstances which no prudence or precautions can avert. After being strained through such a medium into public notice, it is impossible to appear in that pure and perfect

state in which he is produced, who comes forth, armed with his own opinions, supported by his own integrity, and tried by his own merits. And, perhaps, in the annals of literary history, it will be found that a large portion of those who have in the declining period of life retracted the sentiments of their early youth, have acted in the commencement of their career, not as free agents under their own government, but as dependents on mercenary cruelty for the daily sustenance of life.

The uneasy and destitute life which so many pass on these accounts, together with the mortification of so abject a surveillance in the opening of the youthful career, would apparently deter a majority of mankind those who enter upon the lists, from en-

gaging in so glorious a pursuit.
But there are many reasons which
operate upon the young adven-
turer in his outset upon this
dangerous course, which the
careless observer cannot feel.
Every thing is not measured
by him with the eye of steady
calculation: and the visions
of glory which brighten his
early days, sink all tempo-
rary troubles in the shades
of night.

~~In a country like~~
In all old established
countries, where literature, like
every thing else, has attained
a firm and solid footing, there
is something certain upon which
we may be assured of success
in the event of the struggle.
The high and lofty spirit has
indeed to bear the pangs
of neglect, the insolence of
power, and the contraction
of dependence for a season:

but the final reward presents the happy consummation of the desperate game. As long as the mind has inward energy to rest upon the hope of the future, the radiance of the prospect hides present calamity, while it animates with the joys that are to come. In this case, misery acts, not as ~~an incentive to enkindle exertion, and acts~~ a weight to crush into despondence, but an incentive to enkindle exertion.

But that letters should be taken up as a profession upon which to live, in a newly-settled land, where ~~well~~ a proper & genteel estimate of talent never can be made, is flying into the arms of certain, though gradual death. If the drudgery of servitude must be endured, it is surely the course of the

wise man to bear it where it may some time have an end. There never was a more literary ~~character~~ writer ~~that ever~~ ~~lived~~ in this land, where we boast so much and do so little, that ever reaped from his labors any reward but starvation. The productions of the poet and the moralist alike slumber neglected on the shelves, after they have worn away the active years of early life in struggling after a phantom which they never could grasp, and going without recompense through a martyrdom of pain. After all that lying flattery, and empty applause, has echoed to the ears of men as the height of our literary name, the whole ~~matter~~ truth is summed up in this; that after the few ~~miserable~~ un-

happy wretches who undertake the ~~task of~~ thankless office of instructing the American people, have exhausted argument, and accumulated exhortation, till they are weary of resorting to either, they are only ridiculed by knaves that never read them, and abused by fools that cannot understand them.

A.